GEORGE WRIGHT RECALLS TRIUMPHS OF "RED STOCKINGS"

Survivor of Famous Cincinnati Club Gives Accurate History of the World's Champions of 1869

Clears Disputed Point by Averring That Team Went Through the Season Without a Defeat

ABOUT this time in the year 1869 baseball fans all over the Eastern and central sections of the country—and there was a considerable body of enthusiasts even in those days—were talking about the champion Red Stockings of Cincinnati. Here was a team that had just gained what was the equivalent of the world's championship by defeating all comers. The Red Stockings played fifty-seven games that season and won every one of them, something that has never been accomplished since by any nine of major or minor league calibre, and to the great success of this team is ascribed the placing of baseball on a firm foundation as a national sport.

Many men are still livir who recall with pleasant memories their enthusiasm over the games of the season of 1869. The Red Stockings started their winning streak with the first game, played against the Great Western team of Cincinnati on May 4. Their steady string of victories soon attracted attention throughout the East, and as game after game was played with the Reds still on the winning end, every one began wondering if it were possible for them to be beaten. The Cincinnati team finished their work on November 6 by defeating the Mutual Club of New York by the score of 17 to 8 on the home grounds.

The Reds aroused the admiration of even their opponents and many an old boy tells his youngsters of the stirring contests of those days. Not long ago THE SUN printed an editorial concerning the late A. G. Spalding's connection with baseball and it resulted in many of the old time fans writing letters to THE SUN giving their recollections of the champions of 1869. They mentioned the prominent teams of those days and told who the players were, but some of them disagreed considerably upon various points. For instance, there was a difference of opinion, or of memory, on the very important point of whether or not the Reds went through the season of 1869 without being defeated, and it was with a view of clearing up the situation with respect to the first world's champions that THE SUN sent a correspondent to see George Wright of Boston, cricket, baseball, hockey, tennis and golf enthusiast, and one of the four surviving members of the Reds' championship team.

Mr. Wright is 68 years old and sound in wind and limb. He can see a golf ball as far away as when he was trying to judge baseballs knocked in his direction forty-five years ago. Occasionally he "takes his eye off," as they say in the golfing world, and it has the usual result, a topped ball. Outside of this minor defect, which is not the result of poor sight, and a little "slowing up" in footwork, Mr. Wright is in fine physical condition.

Good weather always sees him on the course at the Wollaston Golf Club for at least one round a day, and he frequently enters the open tournaments of the Massachusetts clubs, playing a much steadier game than most people of less than half his age do. Of the New England men who were the first to become interested in this ancient Scottish sport Mr. Wright is probably the best player to-day.

His interest in golf has not weaned him from his first love, baseball. He is to be found at one of the Boston baseball parks several times each week during the season. The big tennis tournaments always find him among the spectators, and his two sons, Beals and Irving Wright, have been among the topnotchers of this game.

From Mr. Wright many interesting comparisons between baseball of the early days and the present time can be obtained. He is a mine of information on sporting events of all kinds, but when it comes to baseball he is in a class by himself. When THE SUN man called on him in his office in Boston there were a few minutes to spare before the "regulars" train for the Montclair links started and he consented to settle some of the points in dispute among THE SUN'S baseball correspondents as well as to relate how he happened to break into baseball.

Mr. Wright drew from a pigeonhole in his desk a worn four page pamphlet containing the record of the greatest championship ball team of the country. There had been other champion teams in previous years, but none ever came near equalling the Cincinnati Red Stockings. "Our Red Stockings" is the title of the pamphlet and it gives in detail the doings of the team in the season of 1869, with "Complete Form of Averages of the Season. Certified by the Secretary of the Club."

"The grand and unequalled success of our world renowned and incomparable Cincinnati, or 'Red Stocking' baseball club is fresh in the memory of the sporting fraternity," says the introductory paragraph of the pamphlet. "Their triumphal march from the Atlantic to the Pacific during the past summer and the great deeds in their line performed, astonished thousands of admirers of the 'national game' at the time."

Then follow the scores of all the games played that season, commencing with a contest at Cincinnati on May 4, when the Great Western team of the same city was beaten 45 to 9, and closing with the defeat of the Mutuals of New York in the home city on November 6, when the score was 17 to 8 in favor of the Reds. Not a single game was lost by Cincinnati that season, and the team amassed a total of 2,395 runs in 57 games, compared with 574 made by their opponents.

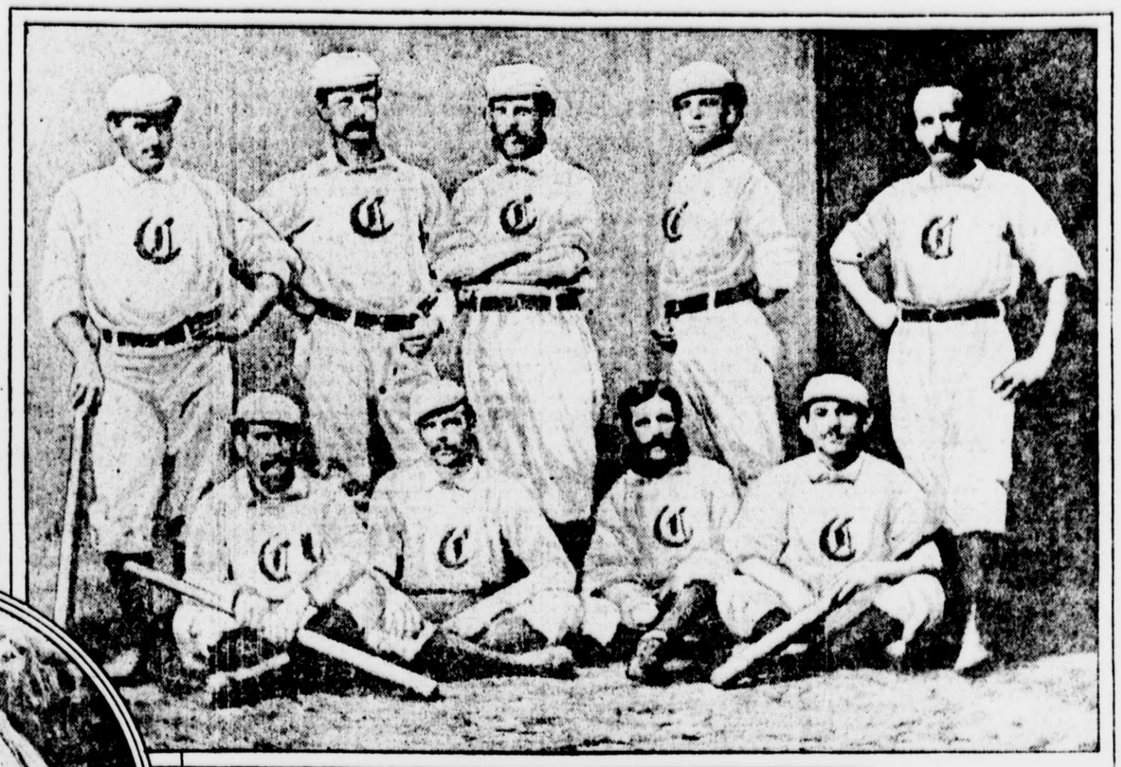
The worst defeat suffered by any of the opponents of the Reds was when the Buckeye team of Cincinnati was overwhelmed 103 to 8. Forty-two of the games were of nine innings duration. Four hundred and seventy-four innings were played by the Reds and in only sixty-eight did they fail to score a run. The closest game was that played on June 15 against the Mutual Club of New York, the score being 4 to 2 in favor of the visitors.

Youngsters who are accustomed to see 1 to 0 and 2 to 1 games may well wonder how it was that the early baseball nines were able to score so many runs. The fact is that the pitchers in those days were not the skilled artists of the present and depended mainly on an underhand ball, which was easy to hit; and then again, the fielders did not gobble up the grounders so skilfully or try to stop with their bare hands the wicked liners that are "speared" nowadays.

The pamphlet shows that the members of the team went to bat 4,045 times and on only 45 occasions did they reach first base on called balls, now known as "bases on balls." Only 284 of them were left on bases; 646 times they were put out on the bases; there were but eight strikeouts registered against the Reds during that wonderful season and collectively they made 169 home runs.

They caught 433 fly and 276 foul balls. There were 562 assists made; 47 double plays and the greatest number of runs made during one inning was 40. The team travelled during the season 11,877 miles and the estimated total attendance for the 57 games was 200,000, quite a difference from the crowds that paid their way in the past season.

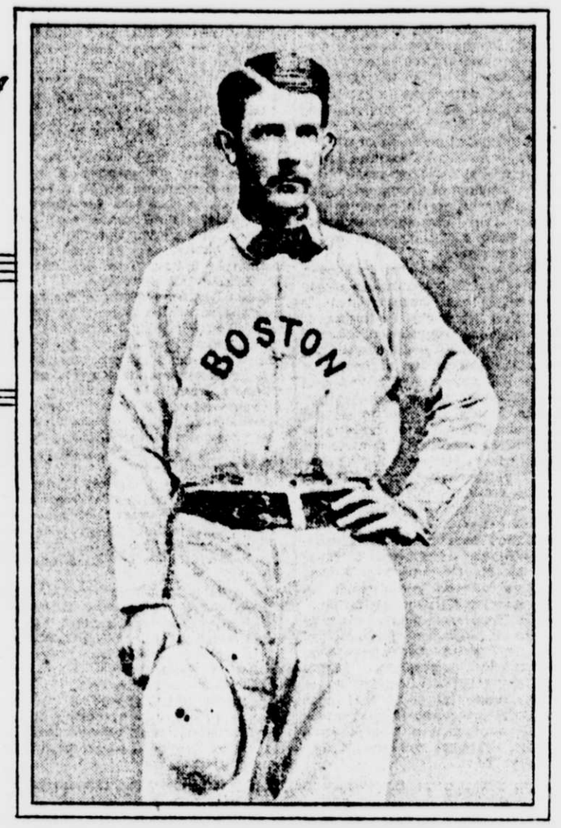
The Red Stockings in 1869 consisted of these players: Harry Wright, centre fielder and change pitcher; George Wright, shortstop and change pitcher; Asa Brainard, pitcher; Douglas Allison, catcher; Charles H. Gould first base; Charles Sweasey, second base; Fred Waterman, third base; Calvin A. McVey, right field; Andrew G. Leonard, left field. Besides George Wright, the survivors of that great team are McVey, now living in California; Allison, who makes his home in Washington, and Gould, a resident of Cincinnati.



The Cincinnati "Red Stockings," world's champions of 1869.

Back row, left to right—McVey, R. F.; Gould, 1 B.; Harry Wright, C. F.; George Wright, SS.; Waterman, 3 B. Front row—Leonard, L. F.; Allison, C.; Brainard, P.; Sweasey, 2 B.

George Wright on the golf links at Apawamis. From a photograph taken this fall.



The late A. G. Spalding when he was a member of the Boston "Red Stockings" in 1872.

Brainard did most of the twirling, his record being 338 innings to 148 for Harry Wright and 14 for George Wright. The latter was the champion hitter of the team. He went to bat 483 times, made 49 home runs, was given first on called balls but three times, did not strike out once, was retired 44 times on fly balls, 7 times on fouls and was put out on the bases 56 times. He captured 82 flies and 15 foul flies and bounds, put out 19 opponents on the bases, made 179 assists and missed but 4 flies.

Mr. Wright was born in the Harlem district of New York in 1847. His father, Samuel Wright, was an old English cricketer, a member of the St. George team.

"I used to see the St. George team play cricket at the Red House in the early '50s," said Mr. Wright to THE SUN correspondent, "and in 1857 the club went to the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, where I saw my first baseball game. The teams playing there comprised the Knickerbockers, Gothams, Eagles, Empires, Mutuals, Actives and several other New York clubs. They were composed of New York business men who went to Hoboken two or three times a week for exercise and recreation, and quite frequently, having heard that I was interested in the game, invitations were extended to me to play.

"I played in every position, and after a year or so I became a regular member of the Gothams. First I was their catcher, but one day a foul tip struck me in the throat and it hurt me so much that I never afterward was able to muster up sufficient courage to catch, and so I went to left field, eventually going to second base and then to shortstop.

"We used to wear long trousers tied at the bottom with skate straps, blouses, caps and canvas shoes with iron spikes. From the Gothams I went to Washington, where I had employment, and played in 1867 with the Nationals of that city. This team was the first to take a trip west. We went as far as St. Louis and met with success.

"The following year I returned to New York and joined the Unions of Morrisania, above Harlem. This team was then the champion club, having won it from the Atlantics of Brooklyn. While with the Unions we made the same trip that the Nationals of Washington had taken, and when we were in Cincinnati played two games with the Red Stockings of that city.

"In 1869 the Reds engaged me to go to Cincinnati, and they also imported Brainard, a pitcher, and John Hatfield, left fielder, both of the Mutual team of New York. They were eager for a championship team in Cincinnati in those days, and it was this club that first made contracts with its players, and its players were also the first to wear short trousers. I had made up my mind that to be a successful baseball player a man should stick to one position, and so I played at short all the time I was with the Reds, except to pitch a few innings.

"We came east and during the year 1869 did not lose a game. We played in Boston, defeating the Lowells, Tri-Mountains and Harvards on Boston Common, Beacon Park and Jarvis Field.

"Early in the spring of 1871 the Boston Red Stocking team was organized. The men behind the move sent for me to organize the team, and I was the first player to be placed under contract. They asked me to become captain and manager, but I declined for the reason that I did not believe a man could be a successful playing manager, and upon my suggestion the Boston club secured my brother Harry from the Cincinnati Red Stockings by telegraph to become manager.

"His first move was to go to Rockford, Ill., and sign up A. G. Spalding, the Rockford pitcher; Ross Barnes, their second baseman, and Fred Cohen, their left fielder. The success of the Boston team is well known, of course. We had a great team in those days and took the championship several times.

"I remained with Boston until the fall of 1878, when I was engaged as manager of the Providence Grays, and I was acting in that capacity when this club won the National League championship for the season of 1879. Then I decided to go into business and so retired from active participation in the game.

"Speaking of the Grays reminds me of the dispute over the famous unassisted triple play made by Paul Hines of the Providence Nationals in 1878. I was on the Boston team at the time and I will tell you exactly how it was made.

"There were Boston men on second and third bases and Hines was out in centre field. The batter hit what we now call a Texas leaguer and it was obvious to the coacher on third base that it was going over the shortstop's head. Consequently the coach signalled wildly for the two runners to go home.

"Hines came in from centre with a great burst of speed, made a remarkable scooping catch of the ball just as it was about to hit the ground and ran all the way to third base. The man who had been on third had already crossed the home plate and the other runner was halfway beyond third base. So by touching the bag Hines completed the triple play. I know all about this play because I was the coacher, and you can just bet I was dumfounded.

"After all there have not been many changes in playing the national game since it was first started. In the early days the players were out for the fun and exercise. There were no leagues or enclosed parks. A ball, a bat and flannels were all the equipment they had. Masks, gloves, mitts, chest protectors, &c., are all modern inventions. The designations of the players were as now. The pitcher and catcher stood in practically the same relative position to the batsman as now.

"There was an umpire, but he had a soft job compared with the men who hold the indicators now. Instead of standing in a dangerous position close behind the catcher or behind the pitcher, in the early days he took life easily in an armchair to the right of the batter and out of harm's way. Rarely did he incur the displeasure of the fans of those days or of the players. Rivalry was keen, but no contestant thought it worth while to make a fuss over some decision which seemed to him to be wrong. They just played all the harder.

"The baseball of the old times was larger, heavier and more elastic than that now in use. No rule governed the length, weight or sizes of the bats. Any kind of wood could be used in their construction. They were of the same diameter as those used nowadays, but the favorite wood was willow, hence the expression, 'Use the willow.'

"The players did not have gloves to protect their hands, consequently more skill was required to catch the ball, because with its greater weight there was danger of severe injuries unless a hard hit or thrown ball was handled perfectly. It was not an unusual thing for a catcher to have both hands black and blue from the impact of the horsehide sphere. The pitcher's position was a trifle further away from the plate than now and for many years curving a ball was something unknown to him.

"The greatest difference between baseball of the '50s and the present time lies in the fact that for some years, when this form of sport was first becoming popular, a batted ball caught on the first bounce went for a put out. The same was true with respect to the third strike, so that the catcher rarely came up close behind the plate, except when there were men on bases.

"It was the old Knickerbocker club of New York that brought about the discontinuance of the out on the bounce rule. A baseball convention was held at 462 Broome street, New York, on January 22, 1857. The Knickerbockers did not conform to the first bounce style of play, except in matches with other clubs. In their practice games the ball was caught on the fly, but the convention, after much debate, refused to change the rule to the Knickerbockers' way of thinking.

"Mr. Davis of the Knickerbockers worked hard to induce the other clubs to alter the rule, and on June 30, 1858, he arranged a game between the Knickerbockers and the Excelsior club of Brooklyn, two of the first baseball teams of those days, to test the new game, thus giving up the boys' sport of catching the ball on the bound. Both nines, as well as the spectators, pronounced the fly ball play a success and it shortened the time of the contest greatly. The players thought it would result in being made a rule at the next convention, but again the proponents failed. Repeated attempts were made in later years to pass the rule, but it was not adopted until at a meeting held in 1865, and even then there was bitter opposition.

"If a pitcher was unable to get the batsman was given a base on balls just the same as to-day, but this method of reaching first base was unusual because it was an unwritten law that the batter should do his utmost to connect with the ball and he was not handicapped by any rule as to where he should step in order to hit it.

"Batting was not done as scientifically in those days as now. The sacrifice hit was unthought of and the catcher was not required to have as good a throwing arm because no one had discovered the value of a stolen base. Long drives were more common than at present.

"Baseball was played in New York prior to 1855, I believe. Several teams used to meet at Madison Square, and that time and there were games in Brooklyn and Harlem. Subsequently almost all of them went over to Hoboken for their fun. The Unions of New York had enclosed grounds in Williamsburg, and there was a fine enclosed field at the Catalpha Grounds in Brooklyn. The usual admission fee at these fields was 25 cents and the spectators were not numerous. The players merely divided the receipts to pay the expenses when regular matched games were played.

"Baseball is on a higher moral plane than it has ever been before. This is to be attributed to the umpires. So long as they are given full charge of the field the game will continue to grow. Baseball has no limits and I expect to see interest in it steadily increase with the years to come."

THREE SCANDINAVIANS AMONG THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

By JULIUS MORITZEN.

THE recent report from Copenhagen that the Swedish Government had decided to award the Nobel prizes for physics to Thomas A. Edison and Nikola Tesla caused little surprise in this country. Of the men said to have been honored for their achievements in literature, Romain Rolland, the French author, is probably beter known in the United States than the three Scandinavians named along with him.

One of the Scandinavian authors, Henrik Pontoppidan, it is true, has for years held a foremost position as a writer and his fame is well established in Scandinavia, in England and on the Continent. Frederik Troels-Lund is the Danish historian. As for Verner von Heidenstam, his idyllic stories and his masterful portrayal are often of Sweden and Swedish soil.

The man named as the winner of the prize in chemistry, Prof. Theodor Svedberg, may be termed an unknown, in so far as the layman is concerned.

The son of a Danish clergyman, a Jutlander by birth, Henrik Pontoppidan left the paternal environment at the age of 17 to study engineering in Copenhagen. His famous novel, "Lucky Per," contains innumerable reminders of his early years in the Danish capital. Idealistically inclined, a mystic, a stupendous worker, novel following novel in endless procession, a master of literary technique, Pontoppidan's writings lose in translation, yet here and there some of his works have found their way into other tongues. The German language, perhaps, lends itself most adequately to a rerendering of the Pontoppidan style.

The religious element is very pronounced in Pontoppidan's productions. His "Promised Land" led William E. Mosher to include Pontoppidan among a few prominent European authors representative of "The Promise of the Christ Age in Recent Literature," as he termed his work.

As in his "Lucky Per," so in his latest work, "Storeholt," Pontoppidan cleaves to the trilogy idea. His books almost always come in big sections. Considerable intervals lie between the issues. Many of his readers find fault with being thus held in suspense, yet the method evidently is Pontoppidan's own, and it would be a daring thing to suggest that he change what apparently lies beyond his own power to make different from what it is. It certainly is a fact that at the present moment no other Danish novelist occupies so important a place in the country's literature as does the author of "The Promised Land," "The Old Adam," "Young Love" and the many other striking books that stand to his credit. From "Lucky Per" to "Storeholt" Henrik Pontoppidan runs the gamut of emotion; picturing in story upon story humankind as it is, the phantasmagoria of a living, struggling, ever hoping race carving out its destiny as circumstances and inclinations make or mar efforts and ambitions.

Returning to Henrik Pontoppidan's inclusion in Prof. Mosher's "The Promise of the Christ Age in Recent Literature" the following gives some idea of the characters in "The Promised Land": "The reader follows the people of the two little coast villages, Vejlby and Skibberup, from the church of the despotic high churchman to that of the democratic young clerical, from the church to the Socialist gathering, from the Socialists to the popular religious conference of the 'Enlightened Friends,' and from the latter to the pietistic preacher of the agonies of hell fire.

"Always in the foreground or in the background, or perhaps standing at one side, lost in introspection, is to be noticed the hero of the tale, Emanuel Hansted. In him the author has sublimated the search for the 'Promised Land,' and perhaps too the reader is to assume that Emanuel, the young chaplain, was the only one who really discovered the way leading to it. The way, which he discovered after much seeking and much erring, was simply the footprints of Jesus, who had once said: 'My kingdom is not of this world.'"

Henrik Pontoppidan's "Storeholt" opens a new chapter in this Danish author's productivity. The perspective is rather changed from what it was when the earlier experiences lend themselves to literary effort. Pontoppidan's fame, however, rests securely on the series of books that Europe some years ago pronounced unique in a mass of unique literature.

No two artists were ever more dissimilar in their ambitious schemes than Henrik Pontoppidan and Frederik Troels-Lund. Nevertheless while the historical domain to some often means a dry as dust avenue for expression it has been the good fortune of Troels-Lund to make history appealing. Like with most Danish writers, the infusion of the picturesque strikes a dominant note and one need but to have some passing acquaintance with "Daily Life in the North During the Close of the Sixteenth Century," for instance, to realize why this work enjoys a popularity scarcely approached by a best seller in Denmark and Norway.

Born at Copenhagen in 1840, Frederik Troels-Lund comes of a family distinguished in art and letters. The famous naturalist P. W. Lund was his uncle. Soeren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, exerted a great influence over the young man, the first wife of Frederik's father having been a sister of Kierkegaard. The early environment was one almost entirely of men and women fond of literature, and often writers of note. Among Troels-Lund's student contemporaries were Geog Brandes, Julius Lange and others who have won fame at home and abroad.

"Socrates's Teaching and Personality" gained Troels-Lund his doctor degree in 1871. Already in 1867 he had published his "Wanderings," but until his entrance as an assistant in the national archives there was little to indicate the career of the future Scandinavian historian. His five years spent among the invaluable manuscripts of the past, his keen enjoyment in discovering unknown facts regarding life in the north some centuries ago, laid the foundation for that immense research work which fills volume upon volume of his exhaustive study of the nation's history.

Made a professor of history in 1888, Troels-Lund nine years later was honored with the title of royal historiographer. He has often told how his five years close application at the national archives opened his eyes to the vast treasures resting under their load of dust and time. His task it became to lift somewhat the veil of Scandinavian unpublished history; to clothe his discovery in work that would appeal to the layman, to bring the past down to the present, that the generation of to-day might obtain clear cut impressions of the heroic age when Scandinavia ruled powerfully among the nations.

Henrik Pontoppidan. Prof. Troels-Lund.

The noted German historian Dietrich Schaefer, while admitting the originality of Troels-Lund's conception of history, nevertheless takes occasion to differ with his Danish colleague in the matter of what the latter terms picturesque presentation of facts. Too much attention is paid to color, to dramatic events, thinks Prof. Schaefer, Troels-Lund, however, has been quick to defend his theory and method and to prove to the satisfaction of other historians at least that where there is strict adherence to the established facts, color and vivacity only enhance the value of the historic product.

It is to be questioned whether a modern historian ever entered with more conscientious zest into his labors than has been the case with Troels-Lund and his researches into the period concerning the sixteenth century discoveries. Christian IV.'s personality stands out like a cameo in black and white, and around this energetic monarch we see arrayed a group of men whose ambitions and adventures in domestic and foreign politics have come down to the present through the devious routes of many lands and many peoples. As history necessarily is a series of events, linking years to years and centuries to centuries, so Troels-Lund's conceptions and written records constitute a balanced whole when viewed from the standpoint of the Scandinavian north.

From 1874 to 1890 the historian was a teacher of history at the School for Officers in Copenhagen. Here he had the excellent opportunity for blending past achievements of others with the requirements of the present, particularly as it concerned the educating of the Danish officers in the essentials of their own military history. In 1880 Troels-Lund published a pamphlet which attracted considerable attention. It rooted to the "Defences of Copenhagen" and came out at a time when the question of strengthening the capital was being agitated in many quarters.

The only aristocrat among Scandinavia's quartet of 1915 Nobel prize winners, Karl Gustav Verner von Heidenstam is yet a Swedish Commoner from the ground up. Born on July 6, 1859, at Olshammer, despite his aristocratic tendencies and antecedents few European writers have done more for the common people in literature than Verner von Heidenstam. He has praised the lowly in prose and poetry. Knowing his native Sweden from much travel through the out of the way regions, associating with those who inspired him to write, wielding a style at once picturesque and correct, in him the Swedish people and the Swedish tongue find a champion whose recent honors apparently have come to him as a just due.

Few other Scandinavian authors can boast greater versatility than Verner von Heidenstam. His range sweeps the continents. The Orient seems to him an open book. One of his greatest works is "Damaskus." Starting out to become a painter, even studying under Geronie in Paris, Von Heidenstam was not long in discovering that his true forte was with the pen rather than with the brush. It was quite natural, therefore, that one of his earliest writings should be "The Happy Artists."

Verner von Heidenstam is among those Scandinavian authors who consistently register a protest against ultra-realism in literature and yet unconsciously employ a not dissimilar style. The naturalistic school never did appeal to him except it were to portray some homely episode, some reference perhaps to a historic event.

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